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TAGS: [GR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MK](#)
SUBJECT: GREECE/MACEDONIA: POLITICAL PARTIES REACT TO FM
BRIEFING

Classified By: POLCOUNS ROBIN QUINVILLE FOR REASONS 1.4 (B,D).

¶1. (C) Greek focus on the Macedonia name issue continued on October 16 when FM Dora Bakoyannis briefed the Cabinet on developments. In her comments after the meeting, FM Bakoyannis again stressed the importance of finding a mutually acceptable name that is composite and distinct,⁸ distinguishing the country as a separate geographical entity from Greek Macedonia. She also noted that "Greek diplomacy is awaiting initiatives and a new proposal by Mr. Nimetz." FM Bakoyannis added the issue would be discussed by the National Foreign Affairs Council -- a body comprised of all of the political parties in Parliament -- once opposition party PASOK has elected its new leadership.

¶2. (C) Several of Greece's political parties took the opportunity to express their views following FM Bakoyannis' remarks to the press. Several New Democracy party leaders reiterated the need for a name describing the country's geographic identity without using the term "Macedonia.⁸ George Karatzaferis, leader of extreme-right Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) stated that LAOS would oppose any solution with the word "Macedonia" in the new name. The (Communist) KKE and (Left Coalition) SYRIZA have long favored a compound name as a solution. SYRIZA leader Alekos Alavanos added that the new name should contain the term "Macedonia" and be mutually acceptable to the two sides. Finally, given its internal leadership struggles, major opposition party PASOK has not recently laid out any formal position on the issue.

¶3. (C) In addition to the statements in the press, GoG public affairs officials are increasingly focused on this issue in bilateral discussions. In a courtesy call by incoming IO and AIO on Monday, Minister Of Communication Roussopoulos cited the name issue as the key foreign policy issue facing the new U.S. Ambassador, noting that pressure is building on the Greek government to maintain a hard line, including from the extreme right. Last Friday, MFA Spokesman Koumoutsakos noted that a Greek veto "is not only possible, but likely unless things change. As a regional leader, Greece can't be humiliated like this by such a small country, and you shouldn't want us to be. We certainly can't afford to lose twice, on this issue and on Kosovo independence.⁸ On Oct. 16, according to another Embassy media source, the Foreign Minister herself had lunch with top-circulation, populist daily Ta Nea, telling the editors in confidence that the &young people⁸ now in power in Skopje just don't get it when it comes to Balkan history.

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